

# critical digest

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## This Week

**The Honeys-Longacre**  
4/28. Cheryl Crawford  
presents new play by  
Ronald Dahl with Hume  
Cronyn-Jessica Tandy.

**South Pacific- City**  
**Center 5/4.** NYC Light  
Opera Company 2nd bill  
with Richard Collett, San-  
dra Deel, Henry Slate, Mar-  
tin Wolfson.

## Future Dates

**Damn Yankees- 46th St**  
5/5...Once Upon a Tailor-  
Cort 5/16...Finian's Rain-  
bow-City Center 5/18...Twin  
Bill-Greenwich Mews 5/25...  
Seventh Heaven-AMTA 5/26...  
Almost Crazy-Bijou 6/1.

## Tryout Dates

**Seventh Heaven-Boston**  
5/10...Once Upon a Tailor-  
Philadelphia 5/3.

## Summer Dates

**Arabian Nights- Jones**  
Beach 6/23.

## Summer Issues of "C.D."

Summer issues of C.D.  
will cover tryouts of new  
plays in Eastern summer  
theatres as reported in  
local dailies, trade journals,  
and via personal inspection.  
Plus other features.

## Digests of Current Week Theatre Reviews

**All in One- Playhouse 4/20.** All except Mirror reviewer enjoyed trio of items presented by Bowden-Barr. Critic panned Williams' play 27 Wagons Full of Cotton as a sadistic dip into depravity, and Bernstein's Trouble in Tahiti as a voluble work.. Majority disagreed. Atkinson, Times, thanked all concerned for an evening of superb theatre, with all items original and good. Alice Ghostley saves Bernstein work, notes Kerr, Herald Tribune. Kerr also thought comedy was overdone in start of Williams piece, but generally he enjoyed the consistently interesting evening. Chapman, News, found the new theatrical potpourri enjoyable and stimulating. All items, including Paul Draper's dancing, were both fun and worthy of serious attention. Finest portrayal yet done by Maureen Stapleton, rates Watts, Post, and one of the season's best. Overall view of evening by aisle-sitter was that of a crazy, mixed up one. While McClain, Journal American, billed evening as diversified and thoroughly engrossing..

**Ankles Aweigh-Hellinger 2/18.** Unanimous panning by critics filed against new musical by Guy Bolton and Eddie Davis with music by Sammy Fain and Dan Shapiro. Betty and Jane Kean are starred. A show that contains no talent at all, leveled Times man. Critics campaigning for a return to the old-fashioned, slam-bang, gags and girls musical comedy should be shot, sums up Kerr, Herald Tribune. Chapman, News, enjoyed low comedy antics of Betty Kean, but not much else. Admitting that first nighters seemed to enjoy it, Coleman, Mirror, billed it as a shoddy frolic. Winchell filed box with Mirror review "Ankles-A Wow! (Boy and Girlululul)". Hawkins, World Telegram & Sun, among others, noted that other comics in show had very poor material. Columnists for NY dailies, including Winchell, Walker, Sobel and Sullivan, on the other hand, raved about the entire show. Network broadcasters have also given musical top pre notices.

**Guys and Dolls- City Center 4/20.** McClain, Journal American, sole daily reviewer who did not feel first NYC Light Opera company revival of season was up to par. He thought current version was sadly watered down. Funke, subbing for Atkinson, Times, is amazed how good the production is considering the handicaps involved. Leila Martin and Ray Shaw in the leads were cheered by most. A generally enjoyable production, adds Chapman, News. Coleman, Mirror, reminded that the popular priced tickets would go fast for the rewarding, stimulating and heart warming show. Watts, Post, joined pros by listing it as a highly satisfying new production.

"Ankles Aweigh" reports top box-office and ticket agency sales inspite of from mild to poor notices. Columnists and network broadcasters have been promoting new musical with Kean sisters. Anthony Farrell is reported to have taken over management of show when Howard Hoyt failed to reach the required money to bring show into NY, says Winchell. Hoyt-Reginald Hammerstein and Fred Finklehoffe are the original producers of show.

#### PlaysPl

The Flowering Peach closed...Kismet closed and opens tour in New Haven...Park is Light Enough closed and opens tour in Boston...The Bad Seed moved to Coronet...Pipe Dream will open at Shubert in November...Gentlemen Be Seated, an original musical comedy with a Civil War background commissioned by Playwrights.

#### Players

Gaby Rodgers to be featured in Heav- only Twins...Billy deWolfe may be featured in Pipe Dream...Dana Elcar has replaced Heywood Hale Brown in The Honeys...Dor- lind Russell planning to star in Auntie Mame...Bob Sylvester, NY News Drama Editor, starts a daily column in paper May 1.

#### Award Department

Vivian Nathan, the shy charwoman in Anastasia, and Fritz Weaver, the scoundrel in The White Devil, selected as winners of Clarence Derwent Awards for the best supporting, non-featured portrayals of the current season.

#### Summer Playhouses

Helen Hayes will appear in Gentlemen, the Queens, a special program presenting star as various queens of drama and his- tory produced at Ann Arbor, Mich, in May ...July 12 is starting date of Conn. Amer- ican Shakespeare Festival. Denis Carey will stage The Tempest and Julius Caesar during the first eight week season... Bucks County, PA, Playhouse opens May 13 with King of Hearts.

#### Other Broadways

"Romberg Festival of Song" with Martha Wright and cast of 50 started national tour in North Carolina. Charles Petersen is the producer...Claude Gir- aud will present The King and I in Paris...Porgy and Bess added home aud- iences and critics to its pro file.

#### Theatre Vaudeville Notes

Artie Dann heads Palace show with Pigmeat Markham, Burton & Janet, Berk & Hallow, Helene Vernon Trio, Jimmy Jimae, and Raylins featured.

#### Theatre Burlesque Notes

NYC License Commissioner McCaffrey turned down T.J. Phillips petition to run burlesque at Brooklyn Orpheum Theatre. Phillips said he only wanted to retain name burlesque but put on shows that in no way contributed to the disrepute of the form. He will ask the State Supreme Court to force the city to issue a license.

#### Theatre Film Notes

Song of Norway assigned by Universal International to writer Stanley Roberts. Four screenplays of show have been rejected ...A Room Full of Roses, due to be produced on Broadway this fall, bought by 20th Century Fox.

#### Theatre Record Notes

Seventh Heaven original cast album to be cut by Decca. Company will also record original cast albums of Ankles Aweigh and On Your Toes.

#### Theatre TV Notes

Noel Coward will star in several of his own plays next fall on CBS TV. He will appear in and adapt two of his plays for ninety minute telcasts.

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GREEN

ROOM

DEPARTMENT

**CIRCLE AWARD VIEWS...**NY Drama Critics Award of a \$75 scroll with no hook shop value is really worth more than the \$500 cash Pulitzer Prize, argues Chapman, News, because Critics award is made by men who actually saw the plays they vote on...Annual meeting of Critics is about as cozy as an arbitration session at the Teamsters' Union, notes McClain, Journal American. The undercurrent is turbulent and the sly cracks and mutterings are many.

**COLUMN TIPS...**A new show that got 100% raves gets almost no ticket agency call, reports Winchell...Abbey Players have turned down many US TV offers, reports Lyons...Moss Hart and Hanya Holm called in to aid Seventh Heaven, hears Kilgallen.

**ONE MAN CENSOR...**Action of License Commissioner McCaffrey in rejecting T.J. Phillips bid for burlesque in Brooklyn condemned by Herald Tribune editorial. It is certainly not within McCaffrey's powers to exercise prior restraint as he has done in this case, editorial states. Paper hopes the courts will set this form of one man censorship straight.

**CRITICAL THOUGHTS...**Tennessee Williams has had an unhappy life, and he wants the audience to suffer for it, explains NBC Leon Pearson. T his achieves his personal revenge on society, but it does not achieve great creative writings...Children's Aid Society complaint on Cat on a Hot Tin Roof was start of reason why "elephant story" was out, hears Variety.

**HOCKED OSCAR FILE...**Prize for worst American play of season given to Black Eyed Susan by Nathan, Journal American. Wayward Saint was picked as worst production of year, Paul Lukas in same play as worst starred actor of the year. The Boy Friend, he felt, had worst score of year, and Hit the Trial for worst lyrics.

**DRAMA DESK MAIL...**Why doesn't the License Commissioner do something about the charity(?) solicitors outside NY theatres, asks Times reader...Whatever happened to Billy Rose's plan to install a bar in the Ziegfeld, questions a C.D. subscriber.

**INTERVIEW HI-LITES...**An investor with an equal piece of every Broadway show in the past year would come out on top, Fanny co-producer David Merrick told Cooke, World Telegram & Sun. A big share of his earnings will come later from movie rights, road companies and amateur productions. Figures show though that hopeful angels have lost \$1 1/2 million this year on 24 flops. Chances are 2 to 1 that you will lose all of your investment



"Pros & Cons by T.M.K."

All in One presents three tasteful, well done segments. Though none can be classified as an actual show stopper, they combine to make a pleasant, entertaining evening of theatre. Alice Ghostley's rendition of the title song "Trouble in Tahiti" is a gem. Paul Draper's dancing is fine and his chatter is delightful, while 27 Wagons Full of Cotton was effective. Latter Williams playlet would have been better if staged as a drama, instead of a comedy.

Guys and Dolls revival at City Center is perfect fare for both those who missed the original and for those who loved the original. Lively production presents a fun-loving cast in the modern classic.

Ankles Aweigh is an old fashioned navy musical of the type that Hollywood used to make with Dick Powell. Current cast and material was not up to even the Hollywood standards. As for Broadway standards the material was low enough, but not loud or funny enough. Comic talents of Kean sisters are wasted.

OFF

BROADWAY

THEATRE

BOOK

COMMENTS

First production of Negro Theatre Guild will be Harvey produced April 30-May 1 at 135th St YMCA...Tempo Theatre, 4 St Marks Place will present Gertrude Stein's In a Garden and Three Sisters Who Are Not Sisters and Jean Genet's The Maids starting May 4 with an all Equity cast...Circle in Square, if license approved will have a reduced seating arrangement, additional aisle space and accessibility from all seats to exits...Death of a Salesman reading staged by Arthur Miller will be repeated at YMHA Poetry Center Apr 25 at 2 40. ...Thornton Wilder will present a reading "Culture and Confusion" at YMHA Poetry Center May 2...Masquers production of Billy Budd opens May 3 at Rooftop Theatre, 111 E Houston...The Three Sisters has announced its last four weeks.

Twin bill of Chekhov's The Anniversary and A Switch in Time by press agent Lola Pergament will be the next presentation at Greenwich Mews starting May 25.

Ghosts presented at Royal Playhouse 62 E 4 receives a fairly good production, rates Herriage, Post, 1881 tragedy is given a lively enough staging and cast is quite effective.

THEATRE

RECORD

COMMENTS

Silk Stocking original cast album (LP Victor) presents a fine latter-day Porter score performed with spirit and precision, okays Wilson, Times. All the expected Porter ingredients are present along with some mock Moscow folk music.

House of Flowers disc delivers an Arlen score which has both exotic quality and memorable melodies, approves Times record reviewer. Columbia has also recorded just the music from the show played by Percy Faith's orchestra, which critic did not like.

"This Way, Miss" by George Jessel (Holt) is not the autobiography of which the star is capable, pans Downing, Variety. Instead book is an effort to impress his daughter and the reader with the extent of Georgie's popularity as "Toastmaster General of the U.S." and to prove his erudition.



THEATRE

TV

COMMENTS

"Affairs of State" production on CBS TV Studio One was a real klunker, votes Tuck, Post. Comedy had all the bounciness and vivacity of an overripe pumpkin. Herm, Variety, disagreed. He thought the 60 minute version of the Broadway play was presented without the loss of any significant detail or flavor.



THEATRE

OUT OF

TOWN

7 Year Itch opened with Tom Swell in Baltimore...Boston playgoers viewing Dark is Light Enough, Damn Yankee and Pajama Tops... Chicago fans seeing Tea and Sympathy, The King and I, The Rainmaker, and The Tender Trap... The Pajama Game is playing in Cincinnati... Cleveland playing host to The Solid Gold Cadillac... Anniversary Waltz Dear Charles and Caine Mutiny Court Martial playing in Los Angeles... The Fifth Season has journeyed to Montreal... Kismet plays the week in New Haven... Seventh Heaven debuted in Philadelphia... Oh, Men, Oh Women and Teahouse of August Moon now in San Francisco.

